Dr. Molthan, Continued

guished awards over the years. In 1979, Dr. Molthan received the Joseph Bank Medal by the Maricopa County Medical Society for distinguished public service in recognition of her compassion and concern for the total patient and of her long and dedicated service to children on the Indian Reservations throughout Arizona. In 1982, she received the Sammy Award from Samaritan Health Service in recognition of her commitment and work. She also received the MCH Golden Anniversary Award from the Arizona Department of Health Services in 1985 and the Distinguished Service Award from the Indian Health Service in 1986.

Solar Sneeze Reflex

A letter in a recent *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests allergy treatment may also ease "solar sneeze reflex," the common but poorly understood phenomenon of sneezing when entering sunlight, in some patients with both problems. David M. Lang, M.D., and William C. Howland III, M.D., of the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, La Jolla, California, studied 138 patients treated for different types of allergic rhinitis, or runny nose; 15 of these also had solar sneeze reflex. Antihistamine, decongestant and other therapy improved the rhinitis, and seven of the 15 also reported improvement in their solar sneezes. Noting other authors have suggested solar sneezes may be a particular problem for baseball outfielders and airplane pilots, the letter notes, "we would add punt return specialists, sky divers and high-wire acrobats, for whom a solar sneeze may be more than just a light matter."

Dietary Control of Parkinson's Fluctuations

A low-protein daytime diet apparently can help control the crippling movement fluctuations commonly seen in Parkinson's disease patients under prolonged treatment with the widely used drug L-dopa-carbidopa, reports a study in the March *Archives of Neurology*. Jonathan H. Pincus, M.D., and Kathryn Barry, MSN, RN, of the Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, say 11 Parkinson's patients put on a nearly zero-protein daytime diet demonstrated great sensitivity to L-dopa and reduced fluctuations. The study says the diet allowed a reduction in the patients' total daily L-dopa dose and discontinuation of all adjuvant therapy to control the fluctuations "while the patients maintained a near normal clinical state." At a year's follow-up, all patients were healthy and at or above ideal body weight.

Brain Metabolism In Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder have higher than normal rates of glucose metabolism in certain parts of their brains, says a study in the March *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Lewis R. Baxter, Jr., M.D., of the UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles, and colleagues studied 14 obsessive- compulsive patients, using positron emission tomography to gauge glucose metabolism in brain areas thought to function abnormally in this disorder. These patients had significantly higher metabolism in the caudate nucleus, a sort of central switching area for the brain, and an area called the orbital gyrus, which is associated with emotion, than did 14 normal controls and 14 patients with depression. Some abnormalities remained even after successful drug treatment. "Our findings do not address the cause of the disorder," the study concludes, "but rather the neuroanatomic localization of the cerebral glucose metabolic processes that may mediate its expression."

Prolonged Mechanical Ventilation

It is not uncommon for critically ill patients to require respirators for long periods of time, but little is known about the outcome of mechanical ventilation in patients placed on such devices for more than a few days. A study in the March *Archives of Internal Medicine* finds prolonged mechanical ventilation is associated with limited survival and poor functional status in those who do survive. James E. Spicher, M.D., and David P. White, M.D., of the Pennsylvania State University's Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania, reviewed the medical records of 250 patients who spent at least 10 days on a respirator during a five-year period. Overall survival was 39 percent at discharge, 29 percent at one year and 22.5 percent at two years. Age and functional status prior to respiratory failure were the best predictors of survival, the study says. Of patients who survived to discharge, 40 percent went to nursing homes and 33 percent were confined to their homes.